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Peoples Temple school gets official status

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THERE is a new addition to the growing family of Guyana's community schools -- the Jonestown Community School, up in the North West Region near Port Kaituma. Located at the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project in Jonestown, which has grown considerably since land was first cleared there nearly four years ago, the school has over 275 students from nursery through high school, and has been in full operation since September, 1977.

A delegation of the teaching staff recently completed a week of seminars and orientation meetings to help them function according to Guyanese guidelines.

The Jonestown Community School is somewhat unique in that it forms a fully integrated part of the carefully structured co-operative community. In addition to being taught traditional academic courses, the students are being trained in nearly twenty skill areas in the work-study programme (for example, agricultural, medical electronics, machine shop, woodworking, clothing manufacture, mechanics, heavy equipment operation, home economics.).

"The entire community is actually a 'school without walls'", explains Headmaster L.T. Grubbs. "School and community exist in a close, symbiotic relationship."

Already dozens of educators and students from various parts of Guyana have visited the community of U.S. "transplant", who are successfully pioneering a new life.

"This is a community school in the truest sense," says a Senior Educational Officer in the Ministry of Education, who toured the Jonestown school and project. "Every young person in the community is in the programme and every adult is either directly or indirectly involved with it also."

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